

● The former Johan Van Oldenbarnevelt, now refitted and renamed Lakonia.

TRAVEL

by K. Westcott Jones

Bought in mid-ocean for cruising Britons

WE live in an era when rapid changes are treated as everyday normality. Now we are entering upon a phase of "sea change," marked in one sphere by a switch from air to sea in our major defence programme, in another by a re-awakening of interest in sea travel.

Cruising for pleasure is gaining strength, with famous liners being chartered to meet the demands of a sea-thirsty public. Ships are being taken off scheduled runs (where air

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transport has made deep inroads) and being cruised with a high measure of success.

Now has come another rapid change. The Dutch liner Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, which, in 1959, was refitted, overhauled, and put on the round-the-world service from Amsterdam via Suez, Australia and Panama, has been bought, as it were, in mid-ocean. She is sailing back from Australia to Genoa, where she will change hands and become the Greek Line's Lakonia.

After a short refit she begins a cruising programme designed entirely for British holidaymakers.

Lakonia starts her new career with a 16-day Mediterranean cruise on April 8.

From April 24 onwards, she will run a regular cruising pattern to Madeira, Tenerife, Las Palmas, Tangier and Lisbon; maintaining all summer what the Greek Line's Arkadia has been doing between December and April.

First time

This will be the first time that Britons will have an opportunity of sailing to Madeira and the Canaries all summer long, stopping off at the island of their choice and returning home by a later sailing.

It is an important step in the trend to make everywhere an all-year-round travel zone — even those regions traditionally considered "winter holiday resorts."

Believe it or not, more Britons went to Egypt last August (a time of burning heat) than went in January at the height of Egypt's fashionable fame in pre-war days.

The prices

The Lakonia will carry 650 one-class passengers in single and double cabins. Costs will range from £65 to an average top level of about £150 for de luxe accommodation.

The Greek Line's North Atlantic service will be maintained in summer and autumn by the Arkadia from North West European ports and by the flagship Olympia from the Mediterranean.

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film: Henry Farrell's "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane," Jan de Hartog's "The Inspector," Peter Gilman's "Diamond Head" all Four Square; Shelley Smith's "The Ballad of the Running Man" (Pan); and a novel by Richard Wormser based on "The Last Days of Sodom and Gomorrah" (Gold Medal).

Fiction miscellany: Giuseppe di Lampedusa's "The Leopard," the enormously praised novel by a Sicilian Prince (Fontana); Doris Leslie's life story of Mary Anne Dismal, "The Perfect Wife" (Pan); Dodie Smith's "I Capture the Castle" (Penguin).

"One Hand Clapping," Joseph Kell's penetrating story of a couple who win big money (Corgi); "Love Affair," Robert Carson's lid-off-Hollywood novel (Panther); Frank Yerby's "Gilded Man" (Four Square); Charity Blackstock's "The Brix Patch" (Hodder).

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